

STUDENT PRIORITIES AND INTERESTS

The priorities of the learner are paramount in planning instruction. Not only will learning be more rapid if the student is working in areas of interest and concern, but instructional sessions will also be more pleasant. In addition, students often know the nature of their reading needs and can provide useful diagnostic information.

Select portions of the Student Priorities and Reading Interests Checklists that seem appropriate. Explaining as necessary, read them to or with the student. Then reread each section and ask the student what is first in importance, then second, third, and fourth.

Student Priorities I Checklists I.1 and I.2 may be used with children or adults on reading levels 1–8. Use I.1 with nonreaders and beginning readers and I.2 with readers on grade levels 2–8. (Do not use both.) Lists I.3 and I.4 can be used to identify topics of interest for younger (I.3) and older (I.3 plus I.4) students. Follow up with discussion. For example, if a student selects a general category such as animals, ask which animals are of most interest and why.

Student Priorities II Checklists are recommended for use with secondary and college students. Ask students to check areas of concern and then go back over the list and prioritize. Be sure to include each student's top priorities in the instructional plan. The priorities and interests lists can be used with a group by showing a transparency of each page to students who have been provided with their own copies. Later, students can be grouped and regrouped on the basis of specific needs and interests.

Unfinished Sentences are of most value to get acquainted with younger students. Ask the child to finish each sentence. Demonstrate as necessary. If a response is not forthcoming on an item, just move on. Quickly jot down a word or two to help you remember the most significant responses so as to maintain spontaneity. After the task is completed, engage the child in a discussion of topics that will help you get better acquainted and establish rapport.

Name: _____ Date: _____

STUDENT PRIORITIES I**I.1 I need specific help with: (OR)**

- A. ☐ Letters of the alphabet
- B. ☐ Sounds for letters of the alphabet
- C. ☐ Meanings of words
- D. ☐ Remembering what I hear
- E. ☐ Understanding what I hear
- F. ☐ Writing my name
- G. ☐ Reading street signs
- H. ☐ Using the telephone book
- I. ☐ Reading directions
- J. ☐ Reading words on food packages
- K. ☐ Reading menus
- L. ☐ Reading the *TV Guide*
- M. ☐ Reading related to work
- N. ☐ Other (please specify): _____

I.2 I need specific help with:

- A. ☐ Short words
- B. ☐ Long words
- C. ☐ Sounds of each letter
- D. ☐ Sounds of letters together
- E. ☐ Reading faster
- F. ☐ Meanings of words
- G. ☐ Understanding what I read
- H. ☐ Remembering what I read
- I. ☐ Remembering what I hear
- J. ☐ Writing notes or letters
- K. ☐ Spelling
- L. ☐ Handwriting
- M. ☐ How to study
- N. ☐ Other (please specify): _____

STUDENT READING INTERESTS**I.3 I would like to be helped to read about:**

- ☐ Adventures
- ☐ Mysteries
- ☐ Sports
- ☐ Comics
- ☐ Humor
- ☐ TV and movie stars
- ☐ Animals
- ☐ Nature
- ☐ Science
- ☐ History
- ☐ Other: _____

I.4 (Continue with older students)

- ☐ Careers
- ☐ Want ads
- ☐ Personal problems
- ☐ Travel
- ☐ Romance
- ☐ Home repair
- ☐ Children's books
- ☐ Religions/spiritual
- ☐ Gardening
- ☐ Cooking
- ☐ Crafts
- ☐ Mechanics
- ☐ Carpentry
- ☐ Sewing/needlework
- ☐ Other: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

STUDENT PRIORITIES II

II.1 I need specific help with this area (✓) or I have a strength in this area (+):

- A. ____ Long words
- B. ____ Short sentences
- C. ____ Long sentences
- D. ____ Punctuation
- E. ____ Reading faster
- F. ____ Meanings of words
- G. ____ Understanding what I read in:
 - ____ Paragraphs
 - ____ Short selections (short stories, essays, etc.)
- H. ____ Remembering what I read
- I. ____ Remembering what I hear
- J. ____ Picking out what to remember when I read
- K. ____ Paying attention while I'm reading
- L. ____ Telling about what I've read
- M. ____ Criticizing what I've read
- N. ____ Spelling
- O. ____ Handwriting
- P. ____ Knowing what to say when I'm writing
- Q. ____ Knowing how to organize ideas when writing
- R. ____ Knowing how to write correctly
- S. ____ Writing research papers
- T. ____ Taking tests
- U. ____ Using the library
- V. ____ Doing computer searches

II.2 I want to study material connected with:

- A. The courses I am taking in: _____

- B. My job as a (manual, directories, direction): _____

- C. My practical needs such as (forms, maps, schedules): _____

- D. My hobby: _____

II.3 I like to read about: _____

A. I would like to read about: _____

B. I would like to read:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------|
| ____ Newspapers | Parts _____ |
| ____ Magazines | Kinds _____ |
| ____ Short stories | Types _____ |
| ____ Fiction | Types _____ |
| ____ Nonfiction | Topics _____ |
| ____ Comics | Kinds _____ |
| ____ Other _____ | |

C. My strengths in reading, writing, and learning are: _____

II.4 I prefer to work:

- ____ In a small group with a tutor
 ____ With another student
 ____ Individually with a tutor

UNFINISHED SENTENCES

1. Sometimes I like to _____
2. Last summer I _____
3. I hope I'll never _____
4. When I read I _____
5. My friend likes to _____
6. I often worry about _____
7. The best thing about school is _____
8. Someday I want to _____
9. The person I like best is _____
10. I wish someone would _____
11. Learning to read is _____
12. My favorite television show is _____
13. The worst thing about school is _____
14. I have fun when _____
15. The biggest problem with reading is _____
16. After school I like to _____
17. I wish my teacher would _____
18. My eyes are _____
19. I would like to be able to read _____
20. If I had three wishes I would wish for _____

Notes from follow-up discussion: _____

Williams, M. (2001). Making connection: A workshop for adolescents who struggle with reading. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 44, 588-602.

Worthy, J., & Invernizzi, M. (1995). Linking reading with meaning: A case study of a hyperlexic reader. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 27, 585-603.

Yin, R. (2002). *Case study research design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zabucky, K., & Ratner, H. (1992). Effects of passage type on comprehension monitoring and recall in good and poor readers. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 24, 373-391.

APPENDIX A Student Questionnaire

1. How old are you? _____
2. What classes at school do you enjoy the most? _____

3. Why do you enjoy these classes? _____

4. What classes at school are your least favorite? _____

5. Why do you not like these classes? _____

6. Do you think you are an excellent reader, a good reader, or a poor reader? _____
Why? _____

7. What kinds of things do you like to read in school? _____

8. What kinds of things do you like to read at home? _____

9. How often do you read outside of school (circle one)?

Not at all/hardly ever	Less than 30 minutes a day
30-60 minutes a day	More than 60 minutes a day
10. In general do you think you are an excellent writer, a good writer, or a poor writer? _____
Why? _____

11. What are some things you like about social studies? _____

12. What are some things you dislike about social studies class? _____

13. Do you enjoy reading in social studies class? Why/why not? _____

14. When you are assigned to read something in social studies that is hard to read, what do you do (circle all that apply)?

Try my best to read it by myself	Ask the teacher for help
Ask a friend for help	I don't read it
Ask someone to read it to me	Ask someone to tell me what it says

(appendix continues)

APPENDIX A—(Continued)

15. When you are assigned something to read in social studies that is easy for you to read, what do you do (circle all that apply)?
- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| I read it | Ask a friend to read it to me |
| I don't read it | Ask someone to tell me what it says |
16. How often does your teacher ask you to write at least one paragraph in social studies (circle all that apply)?
- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 3-5 times a week | less than 3 times a week |
| hardly ever | |
17. When your teacher asks you to write at least one paragraph in social studies, what do you do (circle all that apply)?
- I do the writing to the best of my ability
 - I ask a friend to do the assignment for me
 - I ask a friend to help me with the assignment
 - I copy off of someone's paper
 - I don't do the assignment
 - I ask the teacher for help

APPENDIX B
Sample Interview Questions*Sample of predetermined questions for Sarah*

1. What do you think of social studies this year?
2. What makes reading in social studies interesting? [referring to an answer on the questionnaire]
3. In October you said that social studies seemed easier this year as compared with fifth grade. Do you still think this? Explain.
4. In our last interview you told me you were not a good reader and that this sometimes makes school hard for you. Do you feel that you have gotten any better as a reader in general or do you still think that you are not a good reader? Explain.
5. Sometimes your teacher has the class read out loud. Your teacher will sometimes pause at different places and ask questions about what you have just read. What do you think of this activity?
6. Since October I've seen your teacher talk to your class about reading actively in social studies. Do you remember what this means?
7. Last time we talked you told me how hard the current events project had been for you. Have there been any other assignments or projects that have been hard for you since we last talked?

Sample of predetermined questions for Nicole

1. How do you like being in seventh grade?
2. Last time we talked you said that 7th grade was not as challenging as you thought it would be. Do you still feel this way?
3. What do you think about your abilities as a math student?
4. What do you think about your abilities to read and understand the math textbook?
5. How do you feel you do on the homework assignments? Do you think you are understanding them?
6. Last time you said that when Mrs. Harding says read to yourself you notice a lot of kids just skip the reading and start the homework. You said this makes you want to do the same thing. Do you ever do this? Why? If you do this, do you have trouble with the homework?
7. I hardly ever see you asking your teacher or other students to help you figure out what a word means in math class. Why is that? Do you think you understand all the words in the math text?

Sample of predetermined questions for Alisa

1. Last time, you said that science was your worst subject. But you also said that you were starting to like it. Do you still feel this way?
2. What do you think of the assignments that you have to do in class?
3. Last time you said that when you read to yourself, in your head, you often don't understand what you read. Is this still happening to you? What do you do when you have this problem?
4. Since we last talked I've seen you do some labs in class. One lab had you put a ball on a piece of glass and roll it. Do you remember that? When I saw you do this lab one thing that I noticed was that you did not participate. You did not touch any of the materials. You rarely spoke to your lab partners. Why was that?
5. Last time you said that you thought you would do more in class to raise your grade. Have you been doing more in class? What have you done? Has this idea worked for you?
6. In class your teacher asks questions about different things. She might ask questions about a video you watched or something you read. How do you decide if you are going to raise your hand to volunteer an answer or not?
7. Sometimes, when your teacher gives an assignment, she tells you that you can work with a partner if you want to. What do you think of that? I've never seen you work with anyone. Why?

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Decisions About Reading Expository Text
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